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ABSTRACT

A brief overview is provided of the levels of training and areas of concentration that are available through the 29 institutions of higher education in the State of Pennsylvania offering preparation for the kindergarten through high school special education certification program. Consideration is then given to whether the teacher training is adequate. Concern is focused on: (1) the legislative policies regarding funding, state mandates, and certification guidelines; and (2) the content provided the preservice and inservice teachers during their educational training. A number of shortcomings in teacher education are identified, including reliance on noncategorical certification, insufficient training of mainstream teachers and school psychologists, lack of bilingual special education teachers, inadequate secondary education course content for dealing with the particular problems of adolescents, development of personal communication skills in teachers, and the need to identify competencies that promote student learning. Recommendations for changing existing teacher certification standards are given. Twenty references are listed. (VW)

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IS THE TEACHER UP TO THE TASK?

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Presentation at the "Education for All Exceptional Children" Conference, September 25-26, 1987 at the Embers/Quality Inn and Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, Pa.

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ARE TEACHERS TRAINED FOR THE TASK?

Quoting Dr. Thomas K. Gilhool, Secretary of Education in Pennsylvania, "No child will be left behind" is the challenge for both regular education and the special education teachers. In the state of Pennsylvania many institutions of higher education offer personnel preparation programs in the field of Special Education. A brief overview of what level of training and the areas of concentration, which are available in the K to High School Special Education certification program, follow.

Data obtained from the 1987 issue of the National Directory of Special Education Personnel Preparation Programs, (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps, 1987) reveal the current information on the level of training and on the areas of concentration specific colleges and universities provide. In the State of Pennsylvania, there are 29 institutions of higher education that provide some level of special education teacher training; of the seven colleges and twenty-two universities, twenty-three offer undergraduate programs, twenty-two offer graduate programs, and four offer doctoral programs.

In the early 1970's, the trend in Pennsylvania was to move from a specific area of concentration in the field of Special Education (e.g. MR - Mental Retardation, ED - Emotional Disturbance) to a "generic" undergraduate program. At the present time, the following institutions

offer a four-year Bachelor's Degree in the generic area of "Mentally and Physically Impaired/Handicapped."

1. Beaver College in Glenside, Pa.
2. Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Pa.
3. California University in California, Pa.
4. Carlow College in Pittsburgh, Pa.
5. Cheyney University in Cheyney, Pa.
6. Clarion University in Clarion, Pa.
7. College of Misericordia in Dallas, Pa.
8. Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa.
9. East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg, Pa.
10. Edinboro University in Edinboro, Pa.
11. Gwynedd-Mercy College in Gwynedd Valley, Pa.
12. Indiana University in Indiana, Pa.
13. Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pa.
14. LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pa.
15. Lock Haven University in Lock Haven, Pa.
16. Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pa.
17. Marywood College in Scranton, Pa.
18. Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa.
19. Millersville University in Millersville, Pa.
20. Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa.
21. West Chester University in West Chester, Pa.

At Slippery Rock University, in Slippery Rock, Pa., the Bachelor's degree is specialized in the areas of Mental Retardation, Learning Disabilities, Brain Damaged, and Physically Handicapped. At Cabrini College, in Radnor, Pa., an undergraduate certification program is offered under the title of "Generic Special Education".

At the graduate level, the following institutions of higher learning offer graduate certification programs in the traditional "Mentally and Physically Impaired/Handicapped" category:

1. Antioch University in Philadelphia, Pa.
2. Beaver College in Glenside, Pa.
3. Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Pa.
4. California University in California, Pa.
5. Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa.
6. East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg, Pa.
7. Indiana University in Indiana, Pa.
8. Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa.
9. Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pa.
10. Marywood College in Scranton, Pa.
11. Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa.
12. Millersville University in Millersville, Pa.
13. Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa.
14. West Chester University in West Chester, Pa.

At the graduate level, the following institutions of higher learning offer Master's Degrees in "Mentally and Physically Impaired/Handicapped":

1. Antioch University in Philadelphia, Pa.
2. Beaver College in Glenside, Pa.
3. Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Pa.
4. California University in California, Pa.
5. Cheyney University in Cheyney, Pa.
6. Clarion University in Clarion, Pa.
7. Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa.
8. East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg, Pa.
9. Edinboro University in Edinboro, Pa.
10. Indiana University in Indiana, Pa.
11. Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa.
12. Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pa.
13. Marywood College in Scranton, Pa.
14. Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa.
15. Millersville University in Millersville, Pa.
16. Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa.
17. Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, Pa.
18. Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pa.
19. University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pa.
20. West Chester University in West Chester, Pa.

At Shippensburg University, a Master's Degree emphasizes a Masters in the areas of Learning Disabilities, in Mental Retardation, and in Brain-Damage. Slippery Rock University also designates Masters Degrees in Mental Retardation, in Learning Disabilities, and in Early Childhood. Master's Degrees in "Special Education" are available at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. Supervisory certification is offered at East Stroudsburg University, Lehigh University, Millersville University, Shippensburg University, Slippery Rock University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Doctoral degrees in the field of Special Education are offered at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania State University and Temple University. At the University of Pittsburgh, doctorates are available in Mentally and Physically Impaired/Handicapped, in Hearing, in Vision, and in the area of Severely Handicapped.

Special Education Personnel Preparation Programs in Pennsylvania

		Undergraduate	Graduate	Doctorate
1.	Antioch Univ.		GC-MPH; M-MPH	
2.	Beaver College	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
3.	Bloomsburg Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
4.	Cabrini College	UC-GSE		
5.	California Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
6.	Carlow College	B-MPH		
7.	Cheyney Univ.	B-MPH	M-MPH	
8.	Clarion Univ.	B-MPH	M-MPH	
9.	Col. of Misericordia	B-MPH		
10.	Duquesne Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
11.	E. Stroudsburg Univ.	UC-MPH; B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH Ed-S Supervision	
12.	Edinboro Univ.	B-MPH	M-MPH	
13.	Gwynedd-Mercy College	B-MPH		
14.	Indiana Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
15.	Kutztown Univ.	B-MPH, V		
16.	LaSalle Univ.	B-MPH		
17.	Lehigh Univ.		GC-MPH, SUPV M-MPH & EdS-SUPV	S-SPED
18.	Lock Haven Univ.	B-MPH		
19.	Mansfield Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
20.	Marywood College	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	
21.	Mercyhurst College	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	

		Undergraduate	Graduate	Doctorate
22.	Millersville Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH & EdS-SUPV	
23.	Penn State Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	D-SPED
24.	Shippensburg Univ.		M-MPH (LD, MR, BD, SUPV)	
25.	Slippery Rock Univ.	B-MR, LD, BD, PH	M-MPH, MR, LD, SUPV, ECH	
26.	Temple Univ.		M-SPED	D-SPED
27.	Univ. of Penna.		SUPV, M-SPED	
28.	Univ. of Pittsburgh		M-MPH, H, V, SH	D-MPH, H, V, SH
29.	West Chester Univ.	B-MPH	GC-MPH; M-MPH	

Level of Program
UC - Undergrad. Certification
B - Bachelor's
GC - Graduate Certification
M - Master's
Ed.S - Specialist in Ed. degree
D - Doctoral

Areas of Preparation
BD - Behavior Disorders
ECH - Early Childhood
GSE - Generic Sp. Ed.
H - Hearing Impaired
LD - Learning Disabilities
MPH - Mentally & Physically Handicapped
PH - Physically Handicapped
SH - Severely Handicapped
SPED - Special Education
SUPV - Supervision
V - Visually Impaired

Are teachers trained for the task? There are a number of concerns regarding the "perceived" and actual responsibilities placed and/or dictated to the teacher training institutions. The first broad area of concern focuses on the legislative policies regarding funding, state mandates, and certification guidelines. The second broad area of concern focuses on content provided the pre-service and in-service teachers during their educational training.

One force, that has great impact on the advancement or the hinderance of education being an effective element in society, is the fiscal issue. Education has always been the orphan at the State and Federal levels. Most teacher-education programs produce ten per cent of the funds an institution receives based on enrollments, but they only get about three per cent of the funds because institutions of higher learning use the funds to subsidize other programs.

Another force affecting teacher training structure in Pennsylvania is the state's breakdown of the specific areas of exceptionalities that it recognizes. The areas in which special education teachers receive a "generic" certification includes teaching the mentally retarded, the emotionally handicapped, the learning disabled and the physical/ multiple handicapped. The majority of the states across the nation are currently offering certification in specific areas of concentration (e.g. Mentally Retarded, Emotionally Disturbed, Learning Disabled, etc.)

Information is from the National Directory of Special Education Personnel Preparation Programs, Washington, DC: National Information Directory of Special Education Personnel Preparation Programs, 1987 Edition, 1987

rather than offer a noncategorical, generic certification. Debates have occurred in the past and continue on the controversy regarding certification. Although twenty-nine states now recognize that teachers of the gifted and talented need to be certified as such, only two years ago seventeen states had such certification (Chapey, Pyszkowski and Trimatco, 1985). Pennsylvania, of course, does NOT have certification for the teachers of our gifted and talented students. Another area of concern that has produced across the State sporatic pockets of support is the topic of requiring special certification of teachers working with Pennsylvania's autistic population.

The multiplicity of professional competencies needed by the "resource room" teacher belies the institutions of higher education to squeeze all the training into a four-year program. Even if a preservice Special Education teacher obtained, at an exemplary level, the content from the formal college/university coursework, implementing the knowledge into practicality, plus exhibiting outstanding personal-administrative skills needed to work cooperatively and harmoniously with all teachers and other individuals involved in the child's welfare, requires more responsibility than a beginning teacher can humanly endure. Two states, Nebraska and Vermont, offer special certification for resource room teachers; both Hawaii and Illinois offer

"resource specialist" certification (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps, 1987). Perhaps more states will consider the feasibility of granting special certifications to the special education teachers who are working in the mainstreaming effort.

Since the handicapped students are being mainstreamed, should one not consider the professional competencies of the regular education teacher who has been pulled into the mainstream flow? Effective learning for all children, regular and special, requires system-oriented efforts to firmly establish and strengthen the links between regular and special educators (Reynolds & Birch, 1982). Data gathered by Chapey, Pyskowski and Trimarco (1985) reveal that only twenty states (40%) have required regular education teachers to have at least one course in the field of special education. The states that require two courses in special education are: Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In Pennsylvania, no course in the field of special education is required; furthermore, it appears that there is no future plan to establish such a requirement for regular education teachers. In spite of thirty-five states' respondents to the Chapey, Pyskowski & Trimarco (1985) survey that recommended additional course requirements in special education for the regular teachers, the massive training of regular educators to provide quality mainstreaming experiences for special children requires elimination of communication barriers and fear in working with these children.

The lack of bilingual special education teachers is a severe deficit. Not only is the State of California a leader in offering bilingual teacher training programs for educators entering the field of special education, it offers three specific types of competencies: (1) oral and written proficiency in English for bilingual certification, (2) oral and written proficiency in non-English for bilingual certifica-

tion, and (3) formal bilingual Special Education training program at the higher education level (Salend & Fradd, 1985). New Mexico has also initiated certification in bilingual education.

When one looks at the level of competencies expected of personnel involved in testing the exceptional student, there are six states that offer certification in the field of "diagnosis"; these states are Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah and Washington (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps, 1987).

When one looks at the training program that prepares personnel for positions as school psychologists, an interesting picture develops: Of the 303 colleges and universities with state-approved programs across the United States that were sent letters of inquiry by Sullivan and McDaniel (1982), the survey revealed that school psychology training programs required few, if any, courses dealing with specific handicapping conditions. According to the information obtained from twelve psychology training programs in Pennsylvania, three of the programs required no courses dealing with "special education or exceptional children" content. Of those institutions of higher education that required content in the field of special education or on exceptional children, four offered and required only one course; two institutions of higher education required two such courses, and three universities required three courses that focused on special education. Since the requirements of Public Law 94-142 and the fact that school psychologists are involved in diagnosis, planning and programming for

exceptional children, a re-evaluation of course requirements for training programs in school psychology seems appropriate (Sullivan & McDaniel, 1982, p. 543).

Another area of concern focuses on a broad level of certification (K through high school) for special education teachers in Pennsylvania. Special education teachers recognize the need to develop specialized skills to work with students who have unique needs. Two issues for consideration when one analyzes the competencies special education teachers need to develop before teaching the exceptional student are that the relative importance of specific competencies may vary depending on certain teacher characteristics and setting variables (Sass-Lehrer & Wolk, 1984). The instructional skills required of teachers with more students in one setting will differ from those required of teachers who teach only one or few students at one time. Another type of setting variable to be considered relates to the age of the exceptional student being taught. The adolescent student has a different set of problems he brings with him to the classroom from what the young, elementary-age student brings with him. Research by Zigmond & Thornton (1985) found that the major variable that discriminated high school dropouts from high school graduates was behavior, not academic ability. Indeed, pre-service special education teachers generally have a fear of doing their student teaching in the secondary school systems; they recognize that they've not received training in how to deal with verbal and/or physical aggressive student behaviors. The student teachers are insecure and fearful when it comes to dealing with young children who exhibit temper tantrums!

Extensive research conducted by Bursuck and Epstein (1986) follows the scope of inquiry made by Bagwell (1982), who, in a nationwide survey of 50 state agencies, found that only 7 of 50 states had separate certificates for elementary and secondary special education teachers with 32% of the states considering a certification change. As revealed by the Bursuck and Epstein 1986 study, fourteen states were offering separate secondary certificates; this represented a 100 per cent increase from Bagwell's 1982 study results. As stated by Bursuck and Epstein (1986, p. 7),

> "It is difficult to believe that qualified secondary teachers are being prepared when 35 per cent of the programs do not offer specially designed courses on the handicapped adolescent, when 55 percent of the programs do not supplement their course offerings by required secondary-level courses in other departments, and most importantly, when 45 per cent of the programs do NOT require a secondary school experience."

(Bursuck, William & Epstein, Michael "A survey of training programs for teachers of mildly handicapped adolescents," Teacher Education and Special Education, 1986, 9(1): 3-8.

Merely infusing secondary course content into a program does not guarantee better trained special education teachers. Too many teacher training programs still emphasize curriculum related to elementary

school settings and subject areas, despite an emerging consensus that something different is needed at the secondary level.

To be more specific, special education teachers in the primary-age level settings should have a strong emphasis of undergraduate courses in the field of language arts. For teaching adolescents, the special education teacher needs skills in not only the academic content areas but in areas of prevocational, life-management skills and how to work with the potential high school dropout. This is not meant to suggest that reading and math are of less importance at this age level, but the areas of concentration should be different.

Another force affecting teacher education is the executive or legislative authority that can (and has) established certification guidelines over the ineffectual protests of university teacher educators. Increasing communication between university faculty and state departments of education would be helpful. It is recommended that accrediting bodies and others proposing national standards, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Council for Exceptional Children, specify operational guidelines for teacher education practices. According to researchers Bursuck and Epstein (1986), such guidance is definitely needed in the area of secondary special education.

One component badly needed in the teacher training program is to develop personal communication skills in our future teachers.

Successful interaction with co-workers, administrators, students, their parents, and other personnel will contribute greatly to a harmonious learning environment. To establish effective communicative skills is a must for the special education educators (Hoben, 1980). Supporting this position is research conducted by Gans (1985) who identified specific communication breakdowns between regular and special education teachers who were integrating students with handicaps into the regular education class.

Even without sophisticated research bases, process-product studies do provide some basis for specifying competencies that increase teacher effectiveness. There is a growing body of literature in special education that the teachers of exceptional students do, in fact, place importance on and are aware of competencies that have been demonstrated through research to promote student learning (Englert, 1983, and Larrivee, 1982). Research conducted by Isaacson, Prehm and McCoy (1985) found that special education teachers were in close agreement with the classroom research on teacher behaviors that related to positive student achievement. A Competency Rating Scale (CRS), developed by Blanton and Fimian (1986), which was used with 151 junior and senior teacher trainees in the undergraduate special education program at Appalachia State University, also proved to be a useful tool in identifying competencies believed needed by special education teachers.

The educational arena is constantly changing; new technology continues to enter the classrooms, at the grass roots level as well as in higher education. No matter where an educator is employed, new information should affect his teaching.

Politically, Antonelli (1985) reveals that there is a new trend in several states to "warranty" teachers; this additional variable in the plot of teacher education adds another element to the issue of influence, or lack of it, in preparing future teachers for the real world. Inservice training is another area of concern. Historically, inservice has been a weak, haphazard, incidental component of teacher education (Skrtic, Knowlton & Clark, 1979). With relevant, realistic objectives selected, with qualified staff for conducting the inservice, and identifying individual teacher's needs, rather than holding "mass meetings", often conducted by "experts" who lack practical experience in the classroom, as a one-day shotgun approach, the inservice could contribute to the professional development of the school staff.

If the personnel preparation programs in Pennsylvania are to be re-evaluated, re-assessed, and revised, it can be accomplished if there is a strong commitment by state education officers, university training faculty and local educators to develop better teachers. The following statements identify the task ahead of us:

> "The interests, perspectives, and pressures that influence the evaluation and implementation of public policy in education often differ or diverge from those that shape the institutional goals of teacher education.
>
> The real world is filled with a multiplicity of actors whose visions, motivations, and power quotients result in many possibilities; teacher educators' inactivity, ineffectiveness, or inordinate narrowness of purpose with regards to public policy can contribute to the current fragmented condition of public policy in education, including the adverse effect that this condition may have on improvements in schooling and student learning." (Kelly, 1986, pp. 1 and 2)

Recommendations for assisting in the process of changing existing teacher certification standards include:

(1) Sponsor task forces involving all levels (local and state) to study certification and training requirements.

(2) Establish and disseminate more uniform standards and guidelines from state to state for special educator teacher certification.

(3) Initiate closer interstate relationships to assure that special education in all parts of the nation achieve a high level of competency.

(4) Serve as a catalyst for strengthening and fusing the intra-state connection among college and university training faculty, local educators, and state education officers.

(5) Encourage essential research in developing or in identifying models of teacher certification and teacher training.

(Chapey, Pyszkowski, & Trimarco, 1985, p. 208)

To attract and prepare teachers we should increase the benefits of being a teacher and avoid "reforms" that raise the costs of becoming a teacher (Hawley, 1987).

No matter how adequately the preservice teachers are prepared, they are not super humans; furthermore, the environmental conditions in which the teachers find themselves must also be considered as elements of success or failure. In summary,

> "the capacity of beginning teachers to function well in the classroom is not simply a function of the relative quality of their preservice teacher education programs. Their levels of performance are also directly tied to the quality of the instructional setting in which they practice the science, art, and craft of teaching. Teachers coming out of exemplary preparation programs will fail if they are asked to teach too many youngsters with inadequate materials, if they fail to

> receive adequate administrative and staff support, or if they feel physically or psychologically threatened. Some teachers coming out of mediocre preparation programs will develop into first-class professionals if they are fortunate enough to find employment in a setting that provides maximum personal and professional support to new teachers." (Armstrong, Savage, and Erion, 1986, p. 36).

Are teachers trained for the task? Yes, in some institutions some future educators will receive adequate training to become successful teachers for some handicapped children; however, the public at large is not satisfied with this record of teacher performance, nor should the educational system permit this record to stand. Until educators, politicians, parents, and all our citizenry accept the following mission statement, and act upon it to advance its message, the improvement in schooling and in student learning will be deterred:

> "Our greatest contribution is to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student, every day, learns and grows and feels like a real human being," (Clifton, 1987, p. 1.)

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